



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 1251 - Health Care Facilities and Medical Professional Liability Insurers - Obstetric Services Policies (Doula and Birth Policy Transparency Act)

Hearing Date: February 25, 2025

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) supports *House Bill 1251 – Health Care Facilities and Medical Professional Liability Insurers – Obstetric Services Policies (Doula and Birth Policy Transparency Act)* with amendments. The bill’s focus is to ensure healthcare facilities are honoring a consumer’s decisions about their birthing experience. We particularly want to highlight the importance of facilities: 1) ensuring pregnant individuals can access doula services; and 2) prioritizing the newborn’s bonding with family.

We would request two amendments:

- 1) Consideration of Medical Emergencies: On page 2 in lines 18-20, the bill requires informed consent before any serious medical interventions such as caesarean sections. We wanted to highlight the need for an exception in medical emergencies where the patient is not able to provide consent.
- 2) Focusing the bill on requirements for hospitals. Most of the bill’s requirements are only pertinent in hospital settings, yet the bill requires the Department of Health to promulgate regulations for both hospitals and birthing centers. There are currently no birthing centers in the State of Maryland. To address this issue, ACNM has been working with the Department of Health and other stakeholders for four-years in updating licensure requirements for birthing centers. We believe this bill could unintentionally impose requirements that are only appropriate for hospitals on birthing centers, so we ask for birthing centers to be removed from the bill.

We ask for a favorable report with our recommended amendments. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.